

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 662

2 INTRODUCED BY J. KARJALA

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE "STAGECOACH MARY" MARY FIELDS
5 MEMORIAL HIGHWAY IN CASCADE COUNTY; DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
6 TO INSTALL SIGNS AT THE LOCATION AND TO INCLUDE THE MEMORIAL HIGHWAY ON THE NEXT
7 PUBLICATION OF THE STATE HIGHWAY MAP; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN
8 IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

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10 WHEREAS, Mary Fields was born a slave in Tennessee, circa 1832, and lived enslaved for more than
11 30 years; and

12 WHEREAS, Mary Fields was freed from slavery when President Abraham Lincoln issued the
13 Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863; and

14 WHEREAS, when Mary Fields was 52 years old, she moved to Cascade, Montana; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1895, Mary Fields was hired as the second woman and the first African American to
16 work as a mail carrier in the United States because she was the fastest applicant to hitch six horses; and

17 WHEREAS, the United States Postal Service established Mary Fields as the first African-American
18 female star route mail carrier in the United States, carrying mail from Cascade, Montana, to St. Peter's Mission;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Mary Fields earned the nickname "Stagecoach Mary"; and

21 WHEREAS, Mary Fields drank whiskey, swore often, smoked handmade cigars, wore pants under her
22 skirt, and carried a gun under her apron; and

23 WHEREAS, although women were not allowed entry into saloons, Mary Fields was given special
24 permission by the mayor of Cascade, Montana, to come into any saloon any time she liked; and

25 WHEREAS, Mary Fields was such a beloved member of the Cascade, Montana, community that the
26 schools were closed in honor of her birthday; and

27 WHEREAS, the 67th Legislature of the State of Montana honors Mary Fields for her life of courage,
28 adventure, and friendship.

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2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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4 NEW SECTION. Section 1. "Stagecoach Mary" Mary Fields memorial highway. (1) There is
5 established the "Stagecoach Mary" Mary Fields memorial highway on existing Old U.S. Highway 91 from
6 reference marker 0 at 4th Avenue North in Cascade, Montana, to reference marker 14.3 at Railroad Avenue in
7 Ulm, Montana.

8 (2) The department shall design and install appropriate signs marking the location of the Mary Fields
9 memorial highway.

10 (3) Maps that identify roadways in the state must be updated to include the location of the
11 "Stagecoach Mary" Mary Fields memorial highway when the department updates and publishes the state maps.

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13 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$1 from the general fund to the
14 department of transportation for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021, for the purposes provided in [section 1].

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16 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
17 integral part of Title 60, chapter 1, part 2, and the provisions of Title 60, chapter 1, part 2, apply to [section 1].

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19 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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